

Message Text

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ACTION CU-03

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FM AMEMBASSY TEHRAN

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5010

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E.O. 11652: NA

TAGS: OEXC(COST-SHARING OF USCCE/I)

SUBJ: MODIFICATION OF FULBRIGHT AGREEMENT

REF: STATE 305115

1. FOREIGN MINISTRY LEGAL DIVISION OFFICIAL(KARDAN) SAID TODAY THAT TRANSLATION OF PROPOSED FULBRIGHT AGREEMENT INTO PERSIAN IS STILL IN PREPARATION, BUT WOULD BE READY "IN A FEW DAYS." ASKED WHETHER THERE WAS ANY QUESTION AS TO GOI POSITION ON THE PROPOSAL, HE SAID THERE WAS NOT.

2. THERE ARE INDICATIONS THAT POLICY DIFFERENCES HAVE ARISEN WITHIN GOI OVER FULBRIGHT FUNDING, WHICH MAY ACCOUNT FOR DELAY IN MOVING ON PROPOSAL:

3. THREE WEEKS AGO EMBASSY ASKED DR. FAZLOLLAH AKBARI, THEN VICE-MINISTER SCIENCE AND HIGHER EDUCATION, FOR ASSISTANCE IN EXPEDITING TRANSLATION, WHICH HAD BEEN IN LEGAL DIVISION OF MFA SINCE NOVEMBER 18. AKBARI READILY AGREED. ON DECEMBER 31 AKBARI ADVISED THAT OUTLOOK WAS FAVORABLE FOR ACTION ON THE FULBRIGHT AGREEMENT--HE MEANT ON FUNDING--BUT SAID HE COULD NOT BE SPECIFIC ABOUT THE AMOUNT OF MONEY WHICH GOI WOULD CONTRIBUTE, BEACUSE THE BUDGET FOR THE NEW FISCAL YEAR (BEGINS MARCH 21) WAS STILL IN PREPARTATION.

4. ON JANUARY 3 MINISTER OF SCIENCE AND HIGHER EDUCATION ABDOL-HOSSEIN SAMII, TOLD CAO THAT FUNDS FOR AMERICAN STUDIES WOULD DEFINITELY BE INT THE BUDGET BUT THAT THERE WERE DIFFERING OPIN-
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IONS WITHIN THE GOVERNMENT ABOUT SUPPORT FOR FULBRIGHT, SINCE

GOI ITSELF WAS NOW HANDLING THE SELECTION AND PLACEMENT AT AMERICAN AND OTHER UNIVERSITIES OF LARGE NUMBERS OF IRANIANS. SAMII DID NOT COMMENT ON OBSERVATION THAT THIS WAS QUITE DIFFERENT FROM THE POSITION TAKEN BY DR. PARSA AT THE MARCH MEETING IN WASHINGTON OF THE US-IRAN JOINT COMMISSION.

5. COMMENT: APPARENT LACK OF UNANIMITY WITHIN GOI ON QUESTION OF SUPPORT FOR FULBRIGHT PROBABLY DUE SEVERAL FACTORS:(1) GOI HAS PROBLEMS WITH CASH FLOW: THERE IS SIMPLY NOT MONEY ENOUGH THIS YEAR FOR MANY PROJECTS WHICH VARIOUS ELEMENTS OF THE GOI HAVE UNDERTAKEN OR WOULD LIKE TO UNDERTAKE.(2) CONFLICTING OPINIONS AS TO PRIORITIES: THE PROPOSAL OF THE IRANIAN NATIONAL COMMISSION FOR THE AMERICAN BICENTENNIAL RE SUPPORT FOR AMERICAN STUDIES IS APPARENTLY APPROVED, BECAUSE IT CANNOT VERY WELL BE POSTPONED BEYOND THIS YEAR. BUT THERE MAY BE FEELING THAT FUNDING FOR FULBRIGHT COULD BE DEFERRED. IF GRANTED, IT IS NOT LIKELY TO BE ON A LEVEL HIGHER THAN DEPARTMENT'S ALLOCATION.(3) PERSONAL CONFLICTS: LAST WEEK DR. AKBARI, SENIOR VICE MINISTER OF SCIENCE AND HIGHER EDUCATION FOR SEVERAL YEARS, LONG-TIME MEMBER OF THE FULBRIGHT COMMISSION AND LAST YEAR'S COMMISSION CHAIRMAN, FOUND HIMSELF OUT OF WORK. THE MINISTRY WAS REORGANIZED, HIS POSITION ABOLISHED, AND HIS RESPONSIBILITIES DIVIDED AMONG NEW APPOINTEES. AMONG THOSE NEWLY-CONFIRMED IN SENIOR POSTS WAS RAMATZOLLAH HAGDAN, PRESIDENT OF THE STATE ORGANIZATION FOR STUDENT AFFAIRS, WHOSE ORGANIZATION IS NOW AN INDEPENDENT AGENCY, WITH HAGDAN REPORTING DIRECTLY TO THE MINISTER OF SCIENCE AND HIGHER EDUCATION. HAGDAN HAS HAD THIS POSITION FOR SEVERAL MONTHS, BUT LAST WEEK WAS FORMALLY INTRODUCED TO SHAH AND GIVEN TITLE OF DEPUTY MINISTER. HAGHDAN'S ORGANIZATION IS THE ONE WHICH HANDLES SELECTION, PLACEMENT, ORIENTATION ETC. OF ALL GOI SCHOLARSHIP CANDIDATES. IT IS CONCEIVABLE THAT HAGHDAN IS THE SOURCE OF THE NOTION THAT GOI CAN MANAGE ITS OWN EDUCATIONAL EXCHANGE AFFAIRS AND DOES NOT NEED FULBRIGHT HELP. HAGHDAN IS IN; AKBARI IS OUT.

6. THE CHANGES IN THE MINISTRY DO NOT SUGGEST TILT AWAY FROM COOPERATION WITH THE UNITED STATES IN EDUCATIONAL EXCHANGE, BUT RATHER A CHANGE IN THE PERSONNEL INVOLVED, AND PERHAPS LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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IN MODALITIES OF FUTURE EXCHANGES. HAGHDAN NO DOUBT WISHES HIS ORGANIZATION TO BE PRE-EMINENT IN THE EXCHANGE BUSINESS. EMBASSY DOES NOT KNOW THE ATTITUDE TOWARD FULBRIGHT OF NEWLY-APPOINTED VICE MINISTER SCIENCE & HIGHER EDUCATION DR. MOHAMMAD-ALI TOUSSI, WHOSE RESPONSIBILITIES INCLUDE GOI RELATIONS WITH AMERICAN UNIVERSITIES. TOUSSI HAS PHD. FROM MICHIGAN STATE: IN PREVIOUS POSITIONS IN THE GOI, MOST RECENTLY AT THE STATE ORGANIZATION FOR ADMINISTRATION

AND EMPLOYMENT--EQUIVALENT TO THE US CIVIL SERVICE COMMISSION--
HE HAS BEEN FRIENDLY AND HELPFUL.

7. DIVERGING ATTITUDES TOWARD GOI SUPPORT FOR FULBRIGHT DO NOT
MEAN THAT A POLICY DECISION HAS BEEN OR IS LIKELY TO MADE NOT TO
PROCEED WITH PROPOSED MODIFICATION OF FULBRIGHT AGREEMENT,
BUT THEY MAY AFFECT SIZE, AND POSSIBLY THE DATE OF DELIVERY
OF GOI CONTRIBUTION.

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